
Opening Statement of Congressman José E. Serrano

Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee

Hearing on the Small Business Administration

March 8, 2011

Thank you, Chairwoman Emerson, and I too would like to welcome Karen Mills, the Administrator of the Small Business Administration, to this hearing of the Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee. Because of the crucial part that small businesses play in job creation and our continued economic recovery, the SBA has a very important role in promoting job growth.

The SBA facilitates small business development through lending guarantees, training, technical assistance, and counseling programs, government contracting programs, and advocacy. The agency also helps businesses and homeowners affected by disasters through its Disaster loans program.

The agency's budget request for fiscal year 2012 is \$985 million in new budget authority, and I look forward to discussing this request with you during our questions.

I am disappointed, however, that once again this budget request underfunds some small business assistance programs that specifically help low-income populations. For example,

Microloan Technical Assistance, a program that assists our smallest business owners, would be cut by \$9,220,00 from the FY 2010 enacted level. Zero funding was requested for the Program for Investment in Microentrepreneurs, or PRIME. This program provides grants to help with training and technical assistance for disadvantaged business owners, particularly those in very low-income areas. Particularly during difficult economic times, these are not the programs where we should be targeting our cuts.

I look forward to talking to you today about these programs and learning more about the progress that you are making in some of your newer efforts.

Again, welcome, Administrator Mills.